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## A Christmas Story, The Musical Opens at the Paper Mill: Review and Cast Party







Cast members of A Christmas Story, The Musical

*Credits: Jonathan Sym*

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November 30, 2015 at 6:21 PM

MILLBURN, NJ – “You’ll shoot your eye out” was the recurring phrase that Ralphie Parker was told by his mother and teacher, every time he broached the subject of his Christmas dream present, a Red Ryder Carbine-Action BB gun. A Christmas Story, The Musical is a story about a little boy who wants nothing more than a rifle for Christmas in this charming musical currently playing at the Paper Mill Playhouse.

Last night's official press opening was an astounding success as the audience packed the theater to witness Ralphie's Christmas adventure. Set in Indiana in the 1940's, Ralphie has to deal with a one legged lamp, bullies, a cranky department store Santa as well as a few bloodhounds when pursuing his dream.

Colton Maurer, who plays Ralphie, did an outstanding job playing Ralphie. He acted with a confidence befitting a Broadway veteran. With a strong voice and self-assured acting, this actor led the show with a fantastic ensemble of children and adults. There is no doubt that this New York City based actor is destined for a Tony award one day.

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Ted Koch who wonderfully narrates his story as Ralphie when he was a little boy, plays an integral role in keeping the audience engaged. Koch has a way of making you feel like you're really there, experiencing every part of life in Christmas time Indiana.

Elena Shaddow, of Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ, plays Ralphie's mother. Her "Broadway-esque" voice will want you craving more. Danette Holden, who plays Ralphie's teacher, Miss Shield, is not only witty but does a wonderful tap dance routine with the children's ensemble. This was the best scene in the show.

Chris Hoch, who plays "the old man", Ralphie's father, will have you laughing as well as empathizing with his own dream of being "a winner" in his crossword contest.

New York City actor Douglas Jabara, voice coach for Gavin Swartz, who plays Grover Dell, said "he has just bloomed and blossomed and worked very hard. He got into the show and is doing a fabulous job."

The Swartz family is from Westwood, MA, a suburb of Boston. They rented a house in the area for two months whilst their son was in rehearsals for a month as well as an additional month for production. During their time in Millburn and away from school, Paper Mill pays for tutors to continue the childrens' education so they can maintain their academics and their professional careers simultaneously.

The true beauty of this story was brilliantly told when the Parker family was pre-empted by two bloodhounds that ate their Christmas dinner. Having to relegate themselves to a Chinese restaurant for their supper, they showed us the true meaning of family.

This fantastic cast will entertain you and your family. A must see for the season and is certain to get you in the holiday mood. Appropriate for both adults and kids, this whimsical musical is sure to be a delight.

Shortly after curtain call, the cast party was in full swing at Martini's Bistro and Bar, where they had a private party to celebrate their smash open. There was a Hollywood-like atmosphere as the cast, crew, management, families and the press gathered to laud the successful show.